



# THE SOURCE



NEWSLETTER OF THE NHDES DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM  
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SUMMER 2004

## NH Residents Receive EPA Awards for Drinking Water Protection

During the busy spring season which includes Earth Day and National Drinking Water Week, the U.S. EPA, Region 1, recognized several New Hampshire programs and residents with the following awards.

At an Earth Day ceremony in Boston's Faneuil Hall, the **New Hampshire Drinking Water Source Protection Program**, represented by Sarah Pillsbury, Paul Susca, and Johnna McKenna, received an Environmental Merit Award primarily for the completion of the source assessment program.

These awards honor people who have shown particular ingenuity and commitment in their efforts to preserve New England's environment.

EPA recognized New Hampshire's Drinking Water Source Protection staff for "tremendous contributions to the long-term safety and viability of the state's drinking water sources." In addition to completing the nearly 3,000 source as-

essments, the award cited DES staff for launching creative new programs to ensure that drinking water threats do not materialize. These efforts include the water supply land conservation grant program.

At National Drinking Water Week ceremonies in May, EPA recognized three New Hampshire residents with Environmental Educator awards. This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated exceptional work in drinking water protection through educational efforts.

Since 1999, more than 10,000 students statewide have experienced the "Future Groundwater Guardians of New Hampshire" presentation developed by **Bruce Montville** of LifeWise Community Projects. Through these presentations conducted by Bruce and other LifeWise volunteers, students are made aware of the importance of groundwater to New Hampshire and the steps they can take around their homes to protect it. The program consistently receives high marks from teachers and pre- and post-testing of students indicates they are learning quite a bit.

Ask any third-grader in **Larry Wolkins'** class at Plainfield Elementary School about the drinking water supplied by the Mascoma River and you'll hear all about the treatment plant they've toured and the filtration process they've been studying. Jim Angers, an operator at the Lebanon Water Treatment Plant who nominated Larry for the award, praised the teacher for his dedication to raising the students' awareness of the water source and their families' impacts on it.

For the last three years, **Jill Vacchiano** has educated students in Merrimack in order to supplement Merrimack Village District's efforts in conservation of water resources. Jill's program involves annually visiting 17 fourth-grade classes at Merrimack's three elementary schools to present a series of engaging water lessons about the water cycle, groundwater, and water conservation. Along with this program, Jill is also working with selected high school science students to discuss water treatment, pump stations and test wells.

The NH Department of Environmental Services congratulates these individuals and thanks them for their commitment to drinking water protection and education.



**Congratulations to  
NH's award winners!**

### **Environmental Merit Award**

Sarah Pillsbury, Paul Susca, and  
Johnna McKenna of the NH Drinking  
Water Source Protection Program

### **Environmental Educator Award**

Bruce Montville  
Larry Wolkins  
Jill Vacchiano



# Spotlight on ... Bear Pond Watershed

By Dick Strickford, Watershed Steward, Contoocook Village Precinct

In 1898, several astute individuals realized the benefit of obtaining a pure spring-fed source of drinking water for Contoocook Village, petitioned the state legislature to form a village water precinct, and purchased Bear Pond in nearby Warner. Relatively few serious trespassing issues were evident until around 1980, when Contoocook Village Precinct's watershed land became a haven for users of 4-wheel drive "mudder" trucks, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and dirt bikes. Along with the increase in off-road traffic came an increase in partying, camping, and refuse – not to mention erosion, runoff, and vandalism.

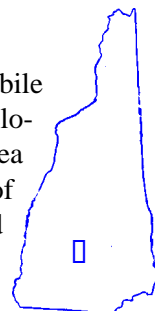
For many years, the Precinct Commissioners tried to address the problem by asserting the Precinct's private property rights. They posted "No Trespassing" signs, only to have them torn down as fast as they went up. They closed off access roads with cables, chains, and gates; only to have them cut down. They stopped maintaining the roads and left logging slash in popular gathering spots in hopes of making the area less attractive, only to find that some off-roaders relished the challenge of the rugged roads.

Needless to say, the policy of closure was not working and was causing confrontation and resentment. In 2001, the Precinct completed a protection plan which provided the basis for change. The following year, the Commissioners decided on a new approach: opening the Precinct's 400 acres of land for controlled recreation and reducing the no-trespassing zone to only the shoreline of Bear Pond.

Working with the local snowmobile club, one of the main trails was relocated from the outlet dam to an area north of the Pond, diverting most of the traffic away from the pond year-round. New gates were erected to keep out large vehicles but allow smaller vehicles such as ATVs to enter. The old private road over the dam was also blocked off to large vehicles.

At each entrance to the area, new signs now announce the access policy. In addition, the Commissioners hired a part-time employee who, among other duties, patrols the watershed and pond and welcomes those who use the area. He stresses voluntary compliance and the need to respect the watershed.

The new "Welcome to Private Property" policy seems to be working, and the Commissioners hope it will work well into the future as the popularity of off-highway recreational vehicles increases, along with the need for recreation areas. By working with those who want to enjoy the outdoors, as opposed to fighting them, the Commissioners hope the new policy can meet the needs of all. For more information about Contoocook Village Precinct's policy, please contact Dick Strickford at 746-4245.



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## Plymouth WHPA Reclassified

On February 5, 2004, DES Commissioner Michael Nolin approved the Plymouth Village Water and Sewer District's request to reclassify groundwater in its wellhead protection area in Plymouth and Holderness. The area will now be classified as GAA, the most protected category, which gives the Plymouth Village Water and Sewer District the authority to enforce the State's Best Management Practice Rule, Env-Ws 421, and prohibits six high-risk land uses. Plymouth joins Jaffrey, Pembroke, Stratham, Salem, Raymond, and the Village District of Eastman in successfully completing the reclassification process. For more information on reclassification, please visit [www.des.nh.gov/dwspp/reclass.htm](http://www.des.nh.gov/dwspp/reclass.htm) or contact Paul Susca at 271-7061 or [psusca@des.state.nh.us](mailto:psusca@des.state.nh.us).

*The Source*, the quarterly newsletter of DES's Drinking Water Source Protection Program, is published by:



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*Printed on Recycled Paper*

To subscribe contact Nicole Clegg at 271-4071  
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# Putting Your Source Assessment Results To Work For You

A series exploring ways that assessment results can be used to focus your protection efforts.

## Minimizing Risks from Potential Contamination Sources

Potential Contamination Sources (PCS) is one of the 13 categories used in DES's Drinking Water Source Assessment Reports. The Groundwater Protection Act (RSA 485-C) identifies PCSs as human activities or operations that pose a reasonable risk of introducing regulated contaminants into the environment in such quantities as to degrade the natural groundwater quality. Nineteen activities are specifically classified as PCSs including vehicle service and repair shops, hazardous waste facilities, cemeteries, underground and aboveground storage tanks, and laboratories, among others. If your water system received a high or medium rating in the PCS category of the assessment report for your source(s) and you are not currently conducting site surveys of these facilities, you may be leaving too much to chance.

If improperly managed, PCSs have the potential to contaminate groundwater where the cost to clean up the contaminant can be hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars. Since 60 percent of New Hampshire residents receive their drinking water from the ground, it is crucial that steps be taken to ensure that these facilities are storing and handling contaminants responsibly to minimize the risk of groundwater contamination. To do this, DES recommends that systems visit the PCSs in their source protection area to survey them for compliance with the Best Management Practice (BMP) Rule (Env-Ws 421).

Conducting BMP inspections and educating facility owners and operators about proper handling of regulated substances not only ensures groundwater protection for

your water supply but also minimizes the facility's environmental liability. Essentially, the BMPs outlined in the rules are just common sense operating practices. For instance, BMPs to be looked for during a survey visit include keeping regulated substances in labeled and sealed containers on intact impervious surfaces, using drip pans under spigots and pumps, and making sure that active floor drains do not discharge to the ground. DES recommends conducting the surveys at least once every three years and offers on-site training to system staff on proper survey procedures.

Does your source protection area contain only a few PCSs? If so, you may be successful in conducting voluntary surveys by asking the PCS owner for access to the facility. A water supplier or municipal health officer can obtain statutory authority to conduct locally enforceable BMP surveys by working with DES to reclassify the source protection area to a protected groundwater classification, adopting a local health ordinance, or a combination of the two. More information about groundwater reclassification or local ordinances for protecting groundwater can be found at [www.des.nh.gov/dwspp](http://www.des.nh.gov/dwspp).

Implementing a program to survey PCS facilities is neither difficult nor time-consuming, especially for a small number of facilities. The most important thing to remember about BMP surveys is that they ultimately benefit everyone. For more information about the BMP rule and PCS surveys, visit [www.des.nh.gov/DWSPP/bmps.htm](http://www.des.nh.gov/DWSPP/bmps.htm). Requests for BMP training should be directed to Diana Morgan at 271-2947 or [dmorgan@des.state.nh.us](mailto:dmorgan@des.state.nh.us).

## Lake Waukegan Watershed Project Emphasizes Involvement

In a cooperative effort with DES and Northeast Rural Water Association (NeRWA), the Town of Meredith kicked off its Lake Waukegan watershed project this spring. Lake Waukegan, located in Meredith and New Hampton, is the sole source for Meredith Water Department. Planning for the project began in December 2003, involving water superintendent Bob Hill, town planner John Edgar, and NeRWA source protection specialist Jen Palmiotto. The project team expanded to include DES's Lakes Coordinator Jacquie Colburn and Drinking Water Source Protection Program staff to plan a public kickoff meeting and develop an informative flier.

The April kickoff meeting, attended by 70 people, stressed that the project is about overall water quality, not just Lake Waukegan as a drinking water source. The result was the development of a 16-member advisory board that includes representatives of each of the five watershed towns appointed by their respective boards of selectmen, as well as representatives of various interests: agriculture, forestry, shoreland owners, business, boating, and education. After bringing all members up to speed on existing water quality and protection efforts, the committee is now planning a watershed tour and will meet twice monthly through December. For more information, visit [www.meredithnh.org/special%20projects.htm](http://www.meredithnh.org/special%20projects.htm).

## DES's Annual Source Protection Workshop A Success!

More than 60 planners, water suppliers, consultants, non-profit organizations, and concerned citizens gathered in the DES auditorium on May 19, 2004 to learn more about effective source water protection measures being used in New Hampshire. The annual workshop, now in its second year, is intended to familiarize people with the available resources for source protection. The day's topics included: DES regulations for source protection, local and regional protection tools, funding opportunities, use of DES's One-Stop GIS tool, numerous case studies, new legislation, water system security, and water conservation.

Workshop evaluations revealed that the majority of participants were pleased with the workshop and felt it was a good use of their time. A number of participants expressed interest in seeing more case studies that highlight both the details of project planning as well as implementation and eventual results. The DWSPP will incorporate these suggestions when planning next year's workshop. Contact Jessica Brock at 271-3303 with any comments or questions. Workshop proceedings and speaker contact information are available at [www.des.nh.gov/dwspp/workshops.htm](http://www.des.nh.gov/dwspp/workshops.htm).

### Security Workshops for Community Systems

A water system security implementation workshop will be held by New England Water Works this fall. This workshop will provide suggestions on how to implement security measures based on your vulnerability assessment including what to do first and how to do it.

In addition, EPA will be conducting community-based workshops throughout New England beginning in December. These workshops are intended to bring together water systems and local first responders in different regions throughout the state.

For information regarding any of the workshops, contact Ray Raposa at NEWWA at 508-893-7979 or [rraposa@newwa.org](mailto:rraposa@newwa.org) or visit the DES Water System Security website at [www.des.state.nh.us/wseb](http://www.des.state.nh.us/wseb).

### Source Protection Grant Proposals Due Nov. 30

Applications for the 2005 Local Source Water Protection Grants have been mailed to water systems, regional planning commissions and consultants and are due November 30, 2004. Grant funds up to \$15,000 per project are available to develop and implement projects to protect existing sources of public drinking water including development of protection ordinances, source security measures, groundwater reclassification, and education. Applications and a list of previously funded projects are available at [www.des.nh.gov/dwspp/grants.htm](http://www.des.nh.gov/dwspp/grants.htm). Questions should be directed to Sarah Pillsbury at 271-1168 or Paul Susca at 271-7061.

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